

## AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

**Claim 1 (Currently Amended)** A hydraulic lash adjuster for an internal combustion engine including a cylinder head and a rocker arm, the hydraulic lash adjuster comprising:

    a bottomed cylinder fixed to the cylinder head;

    a plunger having a bottom wall and an upper end supporting the rocker arm, the plunger being vertically movable while being brought into sliding contact with an inner circumferential face of the cylinder;

    a low-pressure chamber defined in the plunger and filled with a hydraulic fluid;

    a high-pressure chamber defined in a lower interior of the cylinder and partitioned by the bottom wall of the plunger from the low-pressure chamber, the high-pressure chamber being filled with the hydraulic fluid;

    a valve port formed through the bottom wall of the plunger so as to communicate between the ~~with both~~ low-pressure chamber and ~~the~~ high-pressure chambers ~~therebetween~~ chamber, the valve port having at ~~a~~ the high-pressure chamber side an opening edge formed with a valve seat face; and

    a valve element provided in the high-pressure chamber so as to abut and depart from the valve seat face, thereby closing and opening the valve port,

    wherein the valve element is made of a material having a specific gravity smaller than steel but higher than the surrounding hydraulic fluid.

**Claim 2 (Original)** The hydraulic lash adjuster according to claim 1, wherein the valve element is made of a ceramic containing silicon nitride.

**Claim 3 (New)** A hydraulic lash adjuster for an internal combustion engine including a cylinder head and a rocker arm, the hydraulic lash adjuster comprising:

a bottomed cylinder fixed to the cylinder head;

a plunger having a bottom wall and an upper end supporting the rocker arm, the plunger being vertically movable while being brought into sliding contact with an inner circumferential face of the cylinder;

a low-pressure chamber defined in the plunger and filled with a hydraulic fluid;

a high-pressure chamber defined in a lower interior of the cylinder and partitioned by the bottom wall of the plunger from the low-pressure chamber, the high-pressure chamber being filled with the hydraulic fluid;

a valve port formed through the bottom wall of the plunger so as to communicate with the with both low-pressure chamber and the high-pressure chambers therebetween chamber, the valve port having at the high-pressure chamber side an opening edge formed with a valve seat face; and

a valve element provided in the high-pressure chamber so as to abut and depart from the valve seat face, thereby closing and opening the valve port,

wherein the valve seat face is an arcuate face.

**Claim 4 (New)** The hydraulic lash adjuster according to claim 3, wherein the valve element is made of a material with a specific gravity in the range between hydraulic fluid and steel.

**Claim 5 (New)** The hydraulic lash adjuster according to claim 3, wherein the valve element is made of a ceramic containing silicon nitride.

**Claim 6 (New)** The hydraulic lash adjuster according to claim 3, wherein the valve element is biased in the closing direction by a spring element.

**Claim 7 (New)** The hydraulic lash adjuster according to claim 6, wherein the spring element biasing the valve element in the closing direction comprises a first spring element and a second spring element.